

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

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P R 120935Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2412

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY ROME

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USEC BRUSSELS 1715

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 4842

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, SP

SUBJ: LABOR - ASSESSMENT OF SYNDICAL ELECTIONS

REF : MADRID 4280

SUMMARY: JUNE FACTORY-LEVEL ELECTIONS IN GOVT-CONTROLLED SPANISH SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION (SSO) WERE CHARACTERIZED BY MASSIVE 85 PERCENT WORKER PARTICIPATION AND ESTIMATED 5-25 PERCENT SSO SHOP STEWARD POSITIONS WON BY MEMBERS CLANDESTINE LABOR GROUPS. MOST OF LATTER GROUPS, INCLUDING PCE, USO AND ORT, URGED PARTICIPATION AND WERE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL. SOCIALIST UGT, HOWEVER, URGED BOYCOTT, BUT WITHOUT MUCH SUCCESS (SOME UGT FEDERATIONS, PARTICIPATED ANYWAY WITH SUBSTANTIAL SUCCESS). SSO ITSELF AND GOVERNMENT ARE CONCERNED AT NUMBER OF "SUBVERSIVES" ELECTED. END SUMMARY.

1. JUNE 30 MARKED END SCHEDULED PLANT LEVEL SSO ELECTIONS, ALTHOUGH
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THERE IS GRACE PERIOD UNTIL JULY 15 FOR THOSE NOT COMPLETED BEFORE

DEADLINE. PARTICIPATION WAS MASSIVE WITH NOTABLE EXCEPTION BASQUE COUNTRY, WITH 85 PERCENT OF WORKERS PARTICIPATING NATIONWIDE.

2. ELECTIONS WERE REPORTEDLY FAIREST EVER HELD, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SOME INSTANCES OF FOUL PLAY AND ELECTORAL MANIPULATION. JULIAN ARIZA, ONE OF TOP COMMUNIST WORKER COMMISSIONS LEADER IN SPAIN, PRESENTED HIS CANDIDACY FOR SHOP STEWARD IN MADRID PERKINS FACTORY (A SUBSIDIARY OF MASSEY-FERGUSON OF CANADA) WHERE HE WORKS, ONLY TO HAVE CANDIDACY VETOED BY SSO ON SOMEWHAT SPURIOUS GROUNDS. ADDITIONALLY THERE WERE REPORTEDLY NUMBER OF CASES WHERE WORKERS WERE PRESSURED INTO VOTING AND OTHER INSTANCES WHERE WORKERS CAST BLANK BALLOTS.

3. SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY (PCE), PRINCIPAL ELEMENT BEHIND WORKERS COMMISSIONS, IS REPORTED TO HAVE INCREASED NUMBER OF ELECTED PCE SHOP STEWARDS, PARTICULARLY IN CERTAIN LARGE METALLURGICAL FACTORIES (E.G., AT 17,000-WORKER STANDARD ELECTRICA FACTORY, AN ITT AFFILIATE, IN MADRID). USO, A MODERATE CLANDESTINE CATHOLIC-ORIENTED DEMOCRATIC GROUP AFFILIATED WITH IMF IN GENEVA, ALSO DID WELL IN FACTORIES SCATTERED THROUGHOUT SPAIN. USO'S BIGGEST COMPLAINT WAS THAT IT WAS NEARLY ALONE AMONG DEMOCRATIC GROUPS CONTESTING SSO ELECTIONS SINCE IT WAS UNABLE TO PERSUADE SOCIALIST UGT, WHICH BOYCOTTED ELECTIONS, TO JOIN ELECTION CAMPAIGN AS USO'S ALLY. EXTREME LEFTIST ORT, PRINCIPAL CATHOLIC MINORITY COMPONENT OF WORKERS COMMISSIONS, ALSO MADE SUBSTANTIAL GAINS, PARTICULARLY IN NOFTHERN SPAIN AND MADRID.

4. PRINCIPAL CLANDESTINE ORGANIZATION WHICH BOYCOTTED ELECTIONS WAS SOCIALIST "YOUNG TURK" UGT WHICH, WITH EXCEPTION OF BASQUE PROVINCES AND SOME SEVILLE FACTORIES, SAW ITS ELECTION BOYCOTT APPEAL GO LARGEY UNHEEDED. SEVERAL LOCAL UGT FEDERATIONS, RAN CANDIDATES ANYWAY AND WERE ALSO REPORTEDLY HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL IN SECURING SHOP STEWARD POSITIONS, E.G., IN IMPORTANT BANKING SECTOR.

5. A NUMBER OF NONPOLITICAL BUT MILITANT WORKERS SEEKING IMPROVEMENT OF WORKING CONDITIONS, ESTABLISHMENT OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS, AND OFTEN WITH A VAGUE "OPPOSITION" ORIENTATION WERE ALSO ELECTED. (MANY OBSERVERS FEEL THESE MAY COMPRIZE A MAJORITY OF NEW SHOP STEWARDS.) THERE WAS EVEN A MINORITY OF ACTIVIST FALANGIST OR SSO-ORIENTED WORKERS ELECTED.

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6. ANOTHER FEATURE WAS THAT IN MANY FACTORIES WORKERS GOT TOGETHER AND ESTABLISHED "UNITARY" SLATES OF OPPOSITION-ORIENTED CANDIDATES OF ALL IDEOLOGIES. CHIEF INSTIGATOR "UNITARY" SLATES WAS PCE, AND FREQUENTLY CANDIDATES FROM ORT, USO, LESSER OPPOSITION GROUPS, AND NONPOLITICAL CANDIDATES ALSO PARTICIPATED. SUCCESS THIS "UNITARY" TACTIC WAS EXEMPLIFIED BY ELECTIONS IN 25,000 WORKER BARCELONA SEAT AUTOMOBILE PLANT WHERE CANDIDATES IN UNITARY SLATE WERE

ELECTED TO 128 OUT OF 150 SHOP STEWARD POSITIONS ON PLANT LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

7. COMMENT: CLANDESTINE LABOR OPPOSITION GROUPS WHICH RAN CANDIDATES, PRINCIPALLY PCE, USO, AND ORT WERE VERY SUCCESSFUL. SOCIALIST UGT'S BOYCOTT TACTIC IS WIDELY VIEWED AS HAVING BEEN SERIOUS ERROR, BUT WAS PARTIALLY OFFSET, HOWEVER, BY SUCCESS OF RENEGADE UGT MEMBERS WHO PARTICIPATED AS CANDIDATES IN DEFIANCE OF NATIONAL UGT POLICY. (UGT STILL REMAINS PRINCIPAL NONCOMMUNIST LABOR GROUP, WITH SUBSTANTIAL INFLUENCE AND SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL.) GOVT'S SSO, WHICH ENCOURAGED HUGE VOTER TURNOUT IN HOPES WORKERS WOULD ELECT EITHER SSO SUPPORTERS OR PERSONS WHOM SSO COULD CONVERT TO ITS CAUSE ONCE IN OFFICE, IS REPORTEDLY NOW SOMEWHAT CONCERNED AT NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF CLANDESTINE LABOR OPPOSITION GROUPS ELECTED SSO SHOP STEWARDS WHO HOPE TO SUBVERT SSO FROM WITHIN. JUST HOW MANY SUCH "SUBVERSIVES" WERE ELECTED IS A MATTER OF WIDELY DIFFERING SPECULATION. ONLY OFFICIAL FIGURE TO DATE IS THAT ONLY 26 PERCENT OF PREVIOUS SSO SHOP STEWARDS WERE REELECTED. ESTIMATES VARY RE MEMBERS CLANDESTINE GROUPS AMONG 74 PERCENT OF NEWCOMERS BUT RANGE FROM MINIMUM 5 PERCENT TO MAXIMUM 25 PERCENT WITH PCE MEMBERS OR SYMPATHIZERS REPRESENTING HALF SUCH "SUBVERSIVES." NONETHELESS INCREASE IN SHOP STEWARD STRENGTH NON-PCE GROUPS SUCH AS USO AND ORT ALMOST COMMENSURATE WITH PCE INCREASE, THUS PREVENTING PCE FROM HAVING MONOPOLIZED THESE ELECTIONS.

8. OUTCOME OF SSO PLANT LEVEL ELECTIONS WILL ONLY INCREASE DETERMINATION SSO HARDLINERS NOT TO ALLOW SUCH "SUBVERSIVES" TO CAPTURE ANY OF HIGHER-LEVEL SSO ELECTED POSITIONS AT LOCAL, PROVINCIAL, AND NATIONAL LEVELS IN INDIRECT SSO ELECTIONS TO BE HELD THIS FALL, AND THUS INCREASE THE PROBABILITY THAT HIGHER LEVEL ELECTIONS, AS IN PAST, WILL BE MANIPULATED TO ENSURE SSO STALWARTS ARE ELECTED.

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